

# Fired Zenith engineer is charged with murder

By David S. Robinson

A former Zenith Radio Corp. engineer was charged Wednesday with murdering a Zenith project leader whom he apparently blamed — erroneously, it turned out — for the loss of his job or for his failure to get a new one, police said.

Christopher Rickard, 37, a British resident alien who recently had lived in an abandoned warehouse at 4637 W. Fullerton, was indicted Wednesday on charges of murder, armed robbery and felony murder.

He is accused of murdering Richard J. Worel, 57, of 17805 Oak Park in Tinley Park. Worel was reported missing Jan. 31 by his

family.

Worel had been the group leader of a team of engineers designing automated equipment for making television sets, a Zenith spokesman said Wednesday.

Until last Nov. 3, Rickard had been a member of that team. In addition to being co-workers, Worel and Rickard had been close friends off the job, a Zenith official noted.

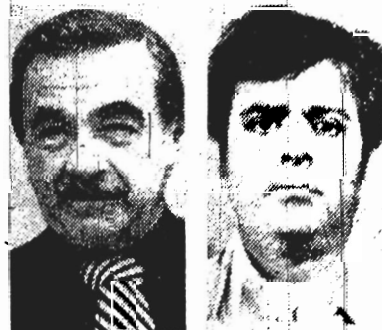
Rickard was told late last year that the job he had held for nearly nine months was being phased out. Zenith had decided to lay off about one-fourth of its U.S. work force and shift most of its operations to Mexico and Taiwan to try to meet foreign competition.

Worel was present when another Zenith official broke the news to Rickard, but did not take part in the decision to let Rickard go, a Zenith spokesman stressed Wednesday.

Nonetheless, police said, Rickard apparently thought Worel either had given him a poor evaluation or was refusing to give him a good recommendation toward a new job.

In fact, the Zenith official noted, Worel was prohibited by company policy from giving any kind of recommendation.

Police said Rickard encountered Worel at a shopping center in River Forest on Jan. 31 and talked Worel into getting in his van-type vehicle to discuss the matter. A quarrel fol-



RICHARD J. WOREL

CHRISTOPHER RICKARD

lowed, police said.

"Rickard produced a gun and when Worel attempted to leave the van, that's when Rickard shot him," said Area 5 homicide Sgt. John Keane. Worel died of wounds to the lung, heart and liver, the medical examiner's office said.

Rickard then took Worel's body back to the warehouse where he lived, apparently, Keane said, "because he didn't know what (else) to

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# 4 more suspensions in wake of Mirage

By Pamela Zekman and Zay N. Smith

Four city sanitation workers will be suspended for five days for accepting money to make illegal garbage collections at the Mirage, a tavern formerly operated by The Sun-Times and Better Government Association.

Peter Schivarelli, deputy commissioner for the Department of Streets and Sanitation, said Wednesday the suspensions would not be effective until completion of a broader investigation of illegal pickups.

The suspensions brought to 15 the number of city, county, or state employees disciplined for misconduct since disclosures of corruption and negligence by public employees began in the Mirage series.

Meanwhile, J. Terrence Brunner, executive director of the BGA, demanded that Mayor Bilandic make public the results of his investigation into the operations of the Chicago Fire Department when the review is completed.

Brunner charged that Bilandic showed a "complete lack of understanding of what the public expects from the Fire Department" when the mayor defended on Tuesday the use

Bilandic's puny response — an editorial; Page 49.

of on-duty firemen to sell tickets for a variety of charities.

The Sun-Times disclosed Sunday that hundreds of firemen are pulled off already undermanned companies to sell the tickets, most recently for the Firemen's Fund Foundation golf outing. The investigation disclosed that although donations are solicited for widows and orphans of firemen, a major beneficiary of the contributions is Fire Comr. Robert J. Quinn's ceremonial marching band.

The fund's use of more than \$300,000 collected since 1971 is now under scrutiny by the Illinois attorney general's office and the Internal Revenue Service.

During the investigation, Chief Fire Marshal William F. Foley repeatedly denied claims by firemen and division fire marshals that fire fighters sell tickets on duty time, and sometimes get weeks off as a reward for selling tickets quickly.

"They do it on their own time," Foley insisted to a Sun-Times reporter. "There is no time off. I'm telling you as the chief. I don't care what anyone else tells you."

But Tuesday, Bilandic defended the duty-time activities as a legitimate function of firemen, likening it to business executives who do charity work on corporate time.

"If he (Bilandic) feels it is right to assign men from active companies to sell tickets, then he should include ticket sellers in the budget and ask the City Council to ratify the use of taxpayers' money for such nonfire-fighting duties," Brunner said.

He said the same accounting should be made in the budget for the use of firemen as chauffeurs and softball coaches and in bands, glee clubs and other "unusual activities" earlier exposed by the BGA.

Brunner also challenged the mayor's claim that duty-time ticket selling does not leave companies undermanned or jeopardize public safety.

"It is ludicrous to say this in light of what our investigation showed and the calls we have been receiving from firemen saying to us that we are correct," Brunner said.

Firemen and division fire marshals have reported to the BGA and The Sun-Times both



## She's freed

Marianne Formeller (right), a 27-year-old North Side mother, leaves Divorce Court with her son, Robert Jr., Wednesday after she agreed to allow her former husband to visit the 4-year-old. Mrs. Formeller ended more than a week's incarceration when she produced the child in court during a custody battle. She had refused to turn over the boy to her former husband, Robert Formeller (above), a Chicago police officer.



Sun-Times Photos by Carmen Reporto and James DePrener said.

before and after the Mirage disclosures that equipment requiring six men goes out on calls with only three or four men because of ticket-selling and other unusual activities.

"One fireman told me this has been going on for years," Brunner said. "He said they have complained to the union (Chicago Firefighters Union Local 2) and get nowhere. He said it makes the men angry when they find themselves up on a ladder all alone knowing other guys are out selling tickets."

Brunner also said it was "outrageous" to liken the ticket-selling duty by firemen to charity drives, by private business. "The mayor shouldn't have to be told that we are dealing with taxpayers' money and public safety here. This is the worst response we have ever heard from any public official during the time I have been at the BGA," Brun-

The three laborers and a truck driver with the city sanitation department were the subject of an article Jan. 22 in the Mirage series. The four collected a total of \$25 for picking up garbage on Oct. 10 and Oct. 26 last year at

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## Abortion stricture remains blocked

U.S. District Court Judge Prentice H. Marshall on Wednesday extended a court order that blocks enforcement of a state law that requires the consent of both parents or a judge before pregnant unmarried minors can obtain abortions.

Marshall set Feb. 21 for ruling on a preliminary injunction sought by the American Civil Liberties Union in a suit challenging the validity of the parental-consent provision of the state's abortion law.

Meanwhile, women under 18 can seek the operation without the written consent of their parents.

The ACLU filed the suit on behalf of four doctors and two pregnant 17-year-olds, contending, among other things, that the law in question denies the women equal protection of the law and infringes on their right to privacy.

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